

## MINUTES.

SILVER CREEK, Saturday, Sept. 11, 1847.

REV. ALEXANDER MURRAY, according to appointment, preached the introductory sermon, from 1 John III, 1: "*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*"

After a short recess the delegates assembled in the house, and were called to order by the moderator. Letters were presented from twenty-nine churches, and the names of the delegates enrolled. [See table.]

The Association then went into the election of officers, which resulted in the choice of Rev JAMES MURRAY moderator, and Rev. S. B. MULLEN clerk. Bro. W. BARNES was appointed reading clerk.

Ministering brethren present were invited to seats.

Brethren J. Crawford, B. Thomas, and B. Williams were appointed a committee to select ministers to occupy the stand to-morrow and during the meeting, who immediately reported Revs. James Murray, T. M. Bond, A. McKenzie, and S. Coker to preach in the order of their names.

In compliance with an invitation extended by the moderator, the New Zion church presented a letter through her delegates, requesting admittance into our body; which was received, and the delegates welcomed to seats.

The following correspondence was received:

From Ebenezer—A letter and package of minutes, by Rev. A. McKenzie.

Mount Pisgah—A letter and minutes, by Rev. J. Merchant.

Eastern Louisiana—A letter and minutes, by Rev. W. B. Allen.

Mississippi—A letter and minutes, by Revs. S. Coker, J. Young, and W. Clark.

Union—A bundle of minutes.

State Convention—A bundle of minutes, by Rev. W. H. Taylor.

The clerk presented a letter and bundle of minutes from the clerk of Central Association. Bro. Taylor being present, was welcomed to represent said Association among us.

A letter was presented from Mississippi River Association by Rev. W. B. Wall, requesting a correspondence with us; but as a measure of difficulty was known to exist between the Mississippi Association (one with which we correspond) and the Mississippi River Association, it was thought expedient to defer an answer until an effort be made to reconcile the differences between them: whereupon, a letter was prepared; and Rev. J. Crawford was appointed to bear it, requesting the Mississippi River Association, by delegation, to meet a delegation from Mississippi Association, with a committee from our body, in an attempt to effect a better mutual understanding between our sister Associations. Brethren J. Crawford, J. Murray, W. Barnes, C. Magee, W. Fortenberry, W. Williams; and S. B. Mullen constitute our committee.

A committee of arrangements was appointed, consisting of brethren J. Crawford, W. Barnes, W. Williams, and W. Fortenberry, together with the moderator and clerk.

Arranged correspondence with sister Associations as follows:

Appointed bro. C. Magee to write to the Mississippi and brethren C. Magee and J. Crawford messengers; bro. B. Thomas to write to Eastern Louisiana, and brethren C. Magee and J. Crawford messengers; bro. W. Fortinberry to write to the Union, and brethren Alex. Murray and S. B. Mullen messengers; bro. W. Barnes to write to Mount Zion, and brethren J. Sandifer and J. Murray messengers; bro. S. B. Mullen to write to Ebenezer, and brethren W. Williams and W. Fortinberry messengers; bro. S. Ross to write to Central, and brethren Alex. Murray and J. Sandifer messengers.

Brethren B. Williams, H. Davis, and S. Harper were appointed the committee on finance.

Adjourned till nine o'clock Monday: prayer by Rev. S. B. Mullen.

#### NINE O'CLOCK, MONDAY MORNING.

Association met pursuant to adjournment: prayer by Rev. A. McKenzie. The roll was called, and no one absent.

#### REPORTS.

The committee of arrangements presented their report, which was received and adopted.

The report from the committee on finance was received and adopted. [See treasurer's report.]

The circular letter was presented and adopted.

The committee to select ministers to occupy the stand reported Revs. J. Merchant, W. H. Taylor, J. Young, and T. M. Bond to preach to-day in the order of their names.

*Query.*—Is it according to gospel order for churches to hold in fellowship a member who joins a masonic lodge, and continues to meet with the lodge? A committee, consisting of brethren J. Crawford, Alex. Murray, and W. Barnes was appointed to prepare an answer to the above query, which presented the following, which was adopted:

We do not pretend to judge of the merit or demerit of masonry; but when a brother will join or frequent the lodge, to the grief and dissatisfaction of his brethren, the church has a right to deal with him.

The corresponding letters were called for, read, and adopted.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

Appointed Rev. W. Fortinberry to preach the next introductory sermon, and Rev. S. B. Mullen his alternate.

Appointed Rev. S. B. Mullen to write the next circular letter.

Appointed a Missionary Board, consisting of J. Murray, J. McKell, Geo. Burkett, W. Barnes, D. Langston, S. Ross, D. C. Butler, J. J. McKell, H. Green, J. P. Norwood, W. Williams, and W. Fortinberry.

Appointed the clerk to superintend the printing and distribution of the minutes.

#### MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.

*Resolved*, that we are gratified at the success of the *Mississippi Baptist*, our own denominational paper, printed at Jackson, in this state, that we approve its course, and that we recommend it to the patronage of the brethren composing this Association.

WHEREAS, a number of mistakes appear in the minutes of last year, most of which were made by the printer; therefore,

*Resolved*, that this resolution be printed in these minutes.

WHEREAS, we believe it to be of great utility for the ministers and deacons of our Association to meet together in order to take into consideration the best means to facilitate the Redeemer's kingdom; therefore,

*Resolved*, that we appoint a meeting of that nature, to be holden with the Steen's Creek church on Friday before the fifth Lord's day in January next.

WHEREAS, in the dispensation of God's providence, he has removed from our christian society and the embraces of their respective churches and connections, our much esteemed brethren, Revs. ISAAC BRAKEFIELD and S. JONES; therefore,

*Resolved*, that we cordially sympathize with the said churches and relatives of the said deceased brethren in this mournful dispensation.

*Resolved*, that we request the churches, in future, to make their letters to the Association as short as convenient.

Rev. J. Murray, one of the members of the Missionary Board for last year, stated that, in consequence of disappointments, they had failed to have a meeting during the year; which was received as the report of the Board, and it was

*Resolved*, that all the labors during the ensuing year be confined exclusively to our own bounds, and that they be applied to the most destitute portions.

*Resolved*, that this Association recommend the clerk to give the printing of the minutes to Rev. W. H. Taylor, editor of the *Mississippi Baptist*, provided he will do it on as reasonable terms as it can be done at any other convenient office.

*Resolved*, that we now adjourn to meet with Mount Zion church, Simpson county, on Saturday before the second Lord's day in September, 1848.

Prayer by Rev. J. Crawford.

JAMES MURRAY, Moderator.

S. B. MULLEN, Clerk.

#### SERVICES ON SABBATH.

At an early hour a large concourse of people were present, and at the appointed time, Rev. James Murray introduced the exercises and delivered an impressive sermon from John iii, 16: "*God so loved the world,*" &c., dwelling particularly on the love of God as manifested in the gift of his Son. He was followed by Rev. T. M. Bond, from the last clause of Mark i, 15: "*Repent ye and believe the gospel.*"

In the evening Rev. A. McKenzie preached from Daniel ii, 44. His theme was the gospel kingdom, as set up and sustained in fulfillment of prophecy. Rev. S. Coker concluded the exercises by an appropriate exhortation and prayer. The services were long, but numerous as the assembly was, they were attentively listened to by nearly all present, from the beginning to the close.



## CIRCULAR LETTER.

### On the Nature and Design of Church Fellowship.

"For want of clear information on this head, there is, both before and after admission, in the minds of many persons, a certain mystic obscurity hanging over the subject, which either repels them from seeking admission, or fills them with disquiet. Christian churches have no mysteries, no *adyta*, no secrets. It is a pernicious policy which would exalt plain duties into secret rites, and transform the simple institutions of the gospel into enigmas."—[*Eclectic Review*, vol. 18, p. 325.]

Nothing is more plain than the nature of christian fellowship, yet nothing is less understood.

1st. Church fellowship is the exercise of the social principle in matters of religion, and in obedience to the authority of Christ.

Many persons seem to imagine that the only end and object of church fellowship is the participation of the Lord's supper. Hence they attach no other idea to a church than that of a company of christians going together to the sacramental table; who have nothing to do with each other till they arrive there, and whose reciprocal duties end with this ordinance. The observance of the Lord's supper, it is confessed, is one design and exercise of fellowship; but it is not the only one. Man is a social being, by which we mean that he instinctively seeks the company of his fellows; is capable of enjoying their society, and derives from their communion no small portion of his improvement and felicity. The aphorism of Solomon is as just as it is beautiful: "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Social bliss was the finish of paradisaical happiness; its influence has survived the shock of our apostacy, and will be felt amidst the felicities of the heavenly state. It is not matter of surprise, therefore, that the Lord Jesus should recognize the social principle in the arrangements of his wise and merciful economy. He might have left his people unconnected by any visible bond, or at best with no other guide to each other than the natural workings and affinities of the human bosom. Instead of this, however, he has by explicit authority grafted the duties of his religion upon the propensities of our social nature. The identifying of Christ's kingdom is love to one another; and in order that this love may be more perfect in its exercise, we are united in visible communion. When, therefore, we join a christian church, we enter a society of believers for the purpose of giving and receiving every suitable expression of mutual love. We then associate ourselves with those toward whom we are to cherish, in consequence of a common relationship, the kindest emotions. We are not only to worship with them in the same place, not only to sit with them at the same sacramental board, but we are to consider ourselves as one of their fellowship; to identify our best feelings with theirs, and in all things to consider ourselves members one of another. Our fellowship is not intended for, nor is it to be expressed by any exclusive act; but it is to extend itself to every possible way of having communion with each other. We are to rejoice together in the common salvation, and bring forth together the fruits of like precious faith. Dr. Watts has very beautifully expressed the feelings which every church member who understands his relationship constantly recognizes:

"My soul shall pray for Zion still,  
While life or breath remain;

There my best friends, my kindred dwell,  
There God my Saviour reigns."



The great end of christian fellowship, and the impropriety of limiting its design to a celebration of the eucharist, are strikingly represented by Mr. Hall: "Nothing is more certain than that the communion of saints is by no means confined to one particular occasion, or limited to one transaction, such as that of assembling around the Lord's table; it extends to all the modes by which believers recognize each other as the members of a common head. Every expression of fraternal regard, every participation in the enjoyments of social worship, every instance of the unity of the Spirit exerted in prayer and supplication, or in acts of christian sympathy and friendship, do as truly belong to the communion of saints, as the celebration of the eucharist. In truth, if we are strangers to communion with our fellow christians on other occasions, it is impossible for us to enjoy it there; for the mind is not a piece of mechanism which can be set a going at pleasure, whose movements are obedient to the call of time and place. Nothing short of an habitual sympathy of spirit, springing from the cultivation of benevolent feelings and the interchange of kind offices, will secure the reciprocal delight, that social pleasure, which is the soul of christian communion. Its richest fruits are frequently reserved for private conference, like that in which the two disciples were engaged in their way to Emmaus, when their hearts burned within them while the Lord opened to them the scripture; when they take sweet counsel together as they go to the house of God in company; when they bear each other's burdens, weep with those that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice; say, have christians no mutual fellowship?"

The sacred historian has given us a very beautiful practical exhibition of the end of christian fellowship in Acts ii, 40-47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Here we see the social principle putting forth all its energies in a way of sacred fellowship, and with direct reference to religion. A new and holy brotherhood set up, of love to Christ and to each other for Christ's sake, was the bond. There was the recognition of a common relationship, and the exercise of all that affection which it involves. The converts immediately gave themselves to each other, as members one of another, and not only performed acts of religious worship together, but exercised a reciprocal and most substantial benevolence, and afforded the most valuable mutual service. Imagination can scarcely delineate a scene more amiably interesting, than that which the infant church in reality displayed.

Bound together by the fellowship of sentiment, feeling, and affection—having one Lord, one faith, one baptism—the believers in Christ found more than a compensation for the contempt, and hatred, and persecution of the world, in their common hopes and mutual offices of kindness. Around

them was a scene of rude agitation and wild confusion, but within the little circle of their society all was union, harmony, and love. Alas! alas! that this reign of love and peace should be of such short duration, that the apostles lived to witness, not indeed its termination, but its interruption, and had to interpose their authority to stop the progress of false opinions and the alienation of heart to which error had given rise.

This exercise of social principle is conducted with direct reference to the authority of Christ. He who is our Lord has commanded it. It is his will that his people should not live solitary and unconnected, but in visible association. To the question, therefore, why are you a church member? the first answer must be, because Christ has commanded it. Independent of the advantage arising from this practice, the true ground of it is the authority of our divine Lord. It is not only a privilege which he has permitted us to enjoy, but a duty which he has commanded us to perform. If we were unable to perceive its advantages, it would still be our duty to comply with it. Church-fellowship is no less a duty than the observance of the first-day Sabbath, as the same reason may be advanced for the one as the other.

From not viewing it in this light it is, that so many refuse to join themselves to the church: they consider membership merely in the light of a privilege which it is at their option to receive or refuse. This is a very great and very injurious error. If a believer remain without visible connection with some christian society, (church,) he is guilty of direct disobedience against his rightful Lord.

2d. Fellowship is the instituted way of making a public profession of the faith and hope of the gospel.

A man may hold the opinions and approve the practices of some voluntary, worldly society; but until he has united himself with it, he is not considered either by its members or the public, as one of their number. His actual joining himself to them, according to the established usage, is his profession. Thus, a man may be a sincere believer of the gospel, and, so far as respects his own private conduct, an exemplary example of genuine piety; but until he has connected himself with a christian church, he has not *professed* himself to be a christian. It is by this act he declares to the world his faith and hope as a believer in Christ. It is thus he virtually says: "I receive the opinions, possess the disposition, submit to the obligations, and observe the practices of the church of God with which I now connect myself." Jesus Christ has made it our duty, not only to receive truth into our hearts, but to confess him before men; and it is a duty on which very considerable stress is laid. This is to be done, not in any ostentatious way, but by joining ourselves to his people, which is a confession that both the church and the world clearly understand. Hence, it is apparent, that church-membership is no trifling matter, since it is calling heaven, and earth, and hell to witness our solemn declaration of submission to the authority of Christ. It is saying, in the hearing of more worlds than one, "I am a christian."

3d. It is the visible bond of union with the disciples of Jesus.

Christians are not only to be united, but are to exhibit their union. Their oneness of sentiment, of affection, of purpose, is to be seen. We are not only to love one another, but our love is to be known, which is impossible without membership. In its collective capacity, a church concentrates, as

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in a focus, the light and love that exists in her individual members. Without being combined in a *visible* union, its splendor would be only as the dim and scattered light which was diffused over the dim chaos in the twilight of creation, while the fellowship of the saints is the same light gathered up and embodied in the solar orb. We are indeed united in spirit with the church of Christ, from the moment we have believed his gospel; but our union is neither expressed nor recognized, until we have joined it in the usual way. We are citizens in feeling and intention, but not yet known from enemies, aliens, and spies. Membership, therefore, is the bond of visible union with the brethren in Christ.

4th. It is *an expressed declaration of our determination to submit to the government and discipline of the church.*

Every society has laws for the regulation of its affairs. Without these it could not exist; and to which every member professes, at the time of his entrance, his determination to submit. The church of the Redeemer has in like manner its social rules, which respects the members in their associated capacity. We are, therefore, not only amenable to the direct authority of Christ, but also to the authority expressed by the voice of the church; we must submit to all its regulations, observe all its injunctions, support its decisions, or we can no longer remain in its communion. If we are called before it, we must appear; if required to explain any part of our conduct, we must comply; if censured, we must submit. We are in no case haughtily to exclaim: "What is the church, that I should obey it? To my own Master I stand or fall." Our act of joining the society is an explicit declaration of our willingness to submit to the laws by which it is governed. We can voluntarily secede when there is just occasion, or in case of false decision, we can mildly protest; but as long as we continue members we must submit, for our very membership professes and requires it.

5th. It is designed to *exhibit on a smaller scale that sublime and glorious union and communion which subsists, not only between all real christians of every country, name, and age, but between the whole redeemed church and their divine Head.*

Passages of a very striking import speak of this most comprehensive confederation: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."—Eph. i, 10: "There is one body and one spirit."—Eph. iv, 4. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ."—1 John i, 3. From these passages we learn, that the aggregate of believers united to Jesus Christ, and through him to the Father, form one vast harmonious fellowship of holiness and benevolence: they are united in the same pursuit, which is the divine glory; in the same means for the attainment of that object, which is the salvation of the soul. The church universal will ever remain the one grand monument on which are recorded the praises of the living God. Of this general assembly every particular society is the miniature resemblance. But its public worship, its beautiful subordination, its mutual affection, its truth, its holiness, its peace is an exhibition to the world of that fellowship which has God in Christ for its head, all believers for its members, heaven for its temple, and eternity for its duration; while every time it assembles for worship, it shows forth the unity of the church and the communion of saints.



# **Treasurer's Report.**

*S. Ross, in account with Pearl River Association, for associational purposes.*

Dr.

To amount received at last Association,	\$144 28
Old balance on hand,	36 72
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	\$181 00

Cr.

By amount paid J. Crawford, messenger,	\$18 00
" " C. Magee, "	18 00
" " S. B. Mullen, "	13 50
" " A. Murray, "	13 50
" " J. Murray, "	10 50
" " C. Price, "	10 50
" " W. Fortinberry, "	7 50
" " J. Murray, "	7 50
" " W. Williams, "	7 50
Paid for printing Minutes,	45 00—151 50

Balance in hand, for associational purposes,	\$30 50
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Dr.

To amount received for missionary purposes,	\$63 99
To balance remaining from 1845,	11 00
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	\$74 99

Cr.

By amount paid A. McKenzie for eight days' labor,	\$12 00
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Amount on hand,	\$62 99
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S. ROSS, Treas. Pearl River Asso.

September 13, 1847.

The committee on finance have examined the above report, and found it correctly stated and amply sustained.

BIRD WILLIAMS, Chairman.

## **List of Ministers with their Possessions.**

Rev. JESSE CRAWFORD, Mellen, Pike county.  
 Rev. W. FORTINBERRY, Monticello, Lawrence county.  
 Rev. W. WILLIAMS, Mount Carmel, Covington county.  
 Rev. A. MURRAY, Gallatin, Copiah county.  
 Rev. S. B. MULLEN, " " "  
 Rev. J. SANDIFER, Georgetown, Copiah county.  
 Rev. J. MURRAY, Westville, Simpson county.  
 Rev. JAS. POWELL, " " "  
 Rev. C. MAGEE, China Grove, Pike county.  
 Rev. Samuel Harper, Monterey, Rankin county.  
 Rev. V. T. Powell.

Names of ordained ministers in SMALL CAPITALS: *identifies in italic.*

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Table showing the State of the Churches.

CHURCHES.	COUNTIES.	DELEGATES.	FUNDS SENT.									
			Whites Baptized	Received by letter.	Dismiss'd	Excluded	Restored	Died.	Whites.	Colored.	Colored Baptized	Total.
												Number Minutes.
											Associational purposes.	Missionary purposes.
Antioch,	Marion,	H. Davis, J. Pittman,	1	3	9	7	1	2	41	25	\$5 00	0 50
Bethany,	Lawrence,	J. Mikell, H. Cooke,	1	5	7	7	1			91	10 00	
Babala,	Lawrence,	E. Furr,		1	1				27	20	5 00	
Bethlehem,	Simpson,	J. Dear,		2	1	3			27	20	3 00	
Copiah,	Copiah,	D. Barren, H. H. Guines,		3	4	3	1		17	9	3 00	
Ebenezer,	Covington,	William Barnes, W. C. Gardner,	1	3	2	2			47	12	5 00	
Fair River,	Lawrence,	C. P. Keyes,		3	2	2			31	3	5 00	
Gallilee,	Copiah,	J. Smith,		6	3	1			32	13	1 50	
Hebron,	Lawrence,	H. S. Green,		3	9				35		6 00	
Hepzibah,	Lawrence,	W. Fortinberry,		6	70	2	1		26	5	3 25	3 00
Harmony,	Lawrence,	W. Williams, J. Polk,	2	6	7				27	25	3 00	8 03
Hopewell,	Copiah,	J. Sandifer,	1	7					31	15	3 00	
Little River,	Marion,											
Mount Zion,	Simpson,	J. Murray, J. P. Norwood,		5	9	2	1		54	29	7 00	
Mayer's Creek,	Pike,	G. W. Woolf, W. Skite,		3	7	1			51	5	5 00	
Mountain Creek,	Rankin,	H. Dear, B. Thomas,		3	6						3 75	
New Chapel,	Pike,	B. Williams, E. Hodges,		2	1				17	5	3 00	
New Zion,	Pike,	C. Mager, T. Lewis,		1	3	3	4		51	6	6 00	
New Hope,	Covington,	J. W. Hornby, J. Warren,			1						2 00	
New Zion,	Simpson,	J. Guines,		4	5	1			46	11	5 00	0 50
Palestine,	Simpson,	J. W. Sandifer,		5	1				15	15	2 00	1 00
Pleasant Hill,	Simpson,	R. Little,		4	2	1			70	23	3 00	
Silver Creek,	Pike,	J. Crawford, G. C. Fortinberry,		1	2	1			24	25	5 00	1 00
Silver Creek,	Lawrence,	S. Ross, T. Price,		1	9	1			40	10	4 95	
Strong River,	Simpson,	H. Thurman,		3	5				25	14	4 00	
Society Hill,	Lawrence,	J. Cox, H. Pope,	1	4	13						4 00	3 50
Steen's Creek,	Rankin,											
Sardis,	Copiah,	A. Murray, S. B. Mullen,	3	5	2				15		3 00	
Shiloh,	Lawrence,	J. Grace, I. Cayle,		3	2	1					2 00	
Union,	Pike,	M. Manning, J. B. Lewis,		8	2				22	2	4 00	
Zion Hill,	Rankin,	S. Harper, L. Howell,	10	37	117	93	3	15	672	171	130 45	\$17 53







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